

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 28, 2003

The Honorable Jim Nussle
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
309 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Spratt
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
214 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Nussle and Ranking Member Spratt:

We are writing to express our opposition to any language in the fiscal year 2004 budget resolution that assumes revenue from drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. For the past two budgets, you have chosen not to legislate on the Arctic Refuge in the context of trying to agree on a budget. We ask you to continue to follow that wise path.

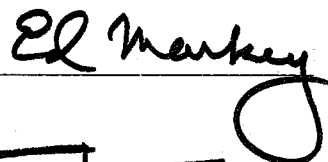
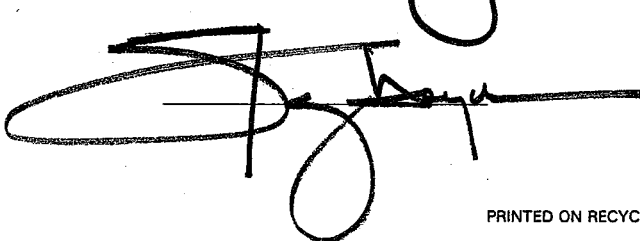
As you know, the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is currently protected against additional oil and gas exploration or development. Nevertheless, the Bush Administration continues to send Congress a budget that assumes an auction of oil and gas leases within the boundaries of the Refuge, specifically within the area that defines one of the most magnificent and rare unspoiled ecosystems in the world. This proposal would sacrifice the pristine nature of this existing wilderness for a limited supply of oil and an increase in federal receipts of a little more than a billion dollars.

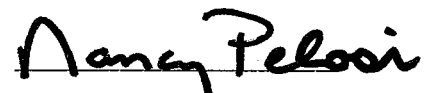
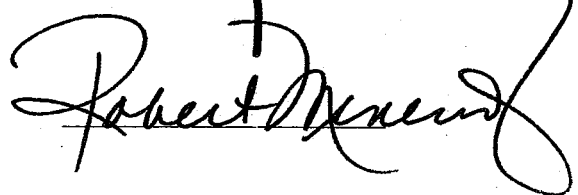
Because of the unique nature of this natural treasure, Congress in 1980 prohibited oil and gas exploration or production on the coastal plain of the Refuge. The majority of Americans has consistently opposed repealing these protections. Because of this widespread opposition, we believe it would be imprudent to assume any new revenue from this source at this time.

The Budget Resolution was designed to ensure that important fiscal matters be debated and decided swiftly, so as to ensure the budgetary health of our government. It is simply not appropriate to attach such a major policy decision to the budget debate, therefore preventing members from publicly and thoroughly debating this issue. The future of the Arctic Refuge is not, by any stretch of the imagination, a matter that is fundamental to the budgetary health of this country. Rather, it is a major policy question, perhaps the most important and controversial environmental policy question before this Congress, and its budgetary impacts are merely incidental to the sweeping and precedent-setting impact of industrializing this pristine national treasure.

We strongly urge you to reject any requests to assume revenue from drilling activity that is prohibited under current law and widely opposed throughout America. If the law ever changes, there will be adequate time to incorporate new assumptions regarding federal revenue from this source in subsequent budgets.

Sincerely,

John H. Ingers

Alan Smith

Jeff Hoffel

Michael M. Hunt

R.

Tracy J.

Ellen Dauscher

Jim McDermott

Tommy Baldwin

Bill Delahunt

Shelley Bulley

J. Burke

Frank Pallone, Jr.

Joseph P.

Steve Starn

Grace J. Napolitano

Susan D. Davis

John W. Oliver

Stephanie Tabbs Jones

Rush Holt

Tim Weller

Bob Latta

Al Blitzer

Robert Wexler

Louise M. Sleight Earl Blumenauer

Myr Y. Costello Marianne Virsik

Luis V. Gutierrez Jane Harman

Sherrill Brown Gerrold Radler

Carolyn B. Maloney Martin J. Sabo

Robert J. McCreary Barney Frank

Al L Lore Evans

Ken Waxman George Miller

Jerry Kleypas Jim Moran

Richard E. Neal Bo Hays

Barbara Lee Wilder L. Peltier

Dale E. Giddens Jeff Furley

Donna Shob

Patrick Kennedy

Carolyn McCarthy

Richard Smoley

William P. W. Walsh

Marty Muehan

Joe E. ~~Stewart~~

Tim Ryan

Steven Northam

Mike Finn

Louella Foght Allard

Corine Brown

Zoe Fajen

Maureen Wall

Julia Carson

R.

Leah J. Smoley

Harold R. Bermer

Harry Ackerman

Ed Cox

Tom Uchelle

Carolyn B. Maloney

Robert E. And

Bobby Scott

Edward Elmer

Mehin L. Watt

Hoyd Deggert

Don Smith

Betty McCollum

Chris Van Hollen

Raul M. Hijaalva

Jan Thibault

Wendell

Edith L. Engel

George Miller

Peter Pustich

Rick Boucher

Jim Langewiesche

Pete Stark

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Vi Cepha

Bill Bassett Jr.

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Paul Sille

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Bill Delahunt
Shelley Berkley
Jay Inslee

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